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Ms Lynne Dawes  
Principal  
Oasis Academy Hadley  
Bell Lane  
Enfield  
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Dear Ms Dawes

## **Academies initiative: monitoring inspection of Oasis Academy Hadley**

### **Introduction**

Following my visit with Paul Scott HMI to your academy on 26–27 January 2011, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was a first monitoring inspection in connection with the academies initiative.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the academy's work, visited 22 lessons, scrutinised documents and met with the Principal, governors, staff and students.

### **Context**

Oasis Academy Hadley opened in September 2009 in the same buildings as its predecessor secondary school. The academy will transfer to new accommodation on a new site in 2013. The Principal was the headteacher of the predecessor school; most staff also transferred. In September 2010 the academy admitted its first primary age pupils: 60 Reception children. Pupils will be admitted into Years 1 to 6 over the next few years. The academy's specialisms are in mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and music.

There are currently 1153 students on roll. The proportions of students from minority ethnic groups or with home languages other than English are above average. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also above average.

There are two elements to the academy's governance: the Oasis executive provides professional accountability and support; the academy council monitors the academy's work and provides a link with the local community.

### **Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning**

Students' attainment is low, but rising quickly. The 2010 GCSE results were low by almost all measures. Given these students' very low starting points in Year 7, they achieved well in mathematics and made the progress expected of them in English. Their progress across the range of subjects was more variable, and students with a statement of special educational need and/or disability made less progress than others. Analysis of the 2010 A Level results indicates that Year 13 students made the progress expected given their starting points at the end of Year 11.

Extensive and thorough systems are in place to track students' academic progress. The results of this tracking show that students are increasingly making better progress. They also indicate that students across the academy with statements of special educational need and/or disability are making similar progress to other students. Many students in Years 10 and 11 have already achieved qualifications: over a third of students in Year 11 have a higher grade in both English and mathematics, and most Year 10 students gained BTEC qualifications last year.

Students were making at least satisfactory or better progress in all of the lessons observed during the inspection; they were making good progress in around half of the lessons and outstanding progress in a few. However, weak speaking skills and low levels of literacy are significant barriers to learning for many students.

### **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

Students are positive about the new academy. They recognise and appreciate the improvements that are being made. They are increasingly ambitious and aspirational for themselves, although some lack confidence when they speak. Behaviour has improved and lessons are now only occasionally disrupted by misbehaviour. Despite the very cramped corridors, behaviour around the academy is also generally good, although it can sometimes be a little noisy and boisterous. Students in Year 11 and the sixth form enjoy and appreciate the wide range of opportunities that they have to contribute to the academy community, for example by taking on leadership roles as ambassadors or prefects. Attendance was low last year. It has improved this year, although the attendance rates of different year groups and groups of students vary considerably.

## **The effectiveness of provision**

The quality of teaching is improving. Classrooms are calm, purposeful and orderly, and relationships between teachers and students are very positive. Inadequate teaching is now rare and much is good; at its best, teaching is superb. Less-effective lessons typically have one or more of the following weaknesses.

- Work that is not challenging enough, particularly for more-able students. In some cases the work is too easy or simply repeats things that students have already learned. In others, activities are not adapted to match the different abilities of individual students.
- Weaknesses in the teacher's use of questioning. In some cases teachers direct their questions to just a few students; as a result, other students do not get fully involved in the lesson. At times teachers' questioning is not probing enough to test and extend students' understanding.
- Tasks that keep students occupied, but do not really help them to learn what the teacher is trying to teach.

The quality of feedback to students is also variable. Students usually know their targets and understand how well they are doing, but do not always know how to improve their work.

The curriculum has been developed to ensure that it meets students' different needs well; further improvements are also planned. The academy's specialisms are supporting development in a number of ways; there has, for example, been an impressive increase in the number of students learning musical instruments.

Students are well supported by staff. Much improved systems are now in place to manage their behaviour, with an emphasis on rewarding students when they do well. A range of effective strategies is in place to support improvements in attendance. Tutor groups now mix students from all year groups. This has done much to break down barriers between students in different year groups, improving the atmosphere around the academy.

A good start has been made in the development of the academy's primary provision. Reception children benefit from a good balance of activities. The way in which staff assess their progress is developing well.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers**

Much has been achieved in the past eighteen months. Staff and students are very clear that the transition to academy status represented a fundamental and very positive change in direction. The Principal is providing very effective leadership and a clear drive for improvement. She is well supported by a strong senior team, who

bring a refreshing realism to their work: while they recognise that much has been achieved, they are quick to acknowledge the large amount that remains to be done. The academy runs smoothly because systems are clear and consistently applied.

Senior leaders recognise that their most important job is to improve the consistency of teaching; this has rightly been their top priority. Much has been done to ensure that leaders across the school are able to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of lessons accurately and consistently. This work has been very successful. Almost all of the lessons visited by inspectors were observed jointly with senior or middle leaders. All were able to analyse and judge the quality of the lessons thoroughly and confidently. Teachers are observed frequently and the results of this monitoring are tracked carefully to identify key areas for improvement, both for individual teachers and for the academy as a whole. A wide range of useful support and training is being provided to help teachers to improve their practice. Robust action is being taken to eliminate any inadequate teaching. Other aspects of the academy's work are also monitored carefully and rigorously.

The Oasis executive and academy council work closely together and are playing a valuable role in the academy's improvement. The executive provides sharply focussed professional support and challenge. The academy council supports this work, acting as a useful 'critical friend' to leaders, but also providing close links with the local community.

All of this bodes well for the future: the academy now has a strong capacity to continue its improvement.

### **External support**

Leaders are making effective use of help and support from a very wide range of sources. Examples include good use of additional senior leaders provided through the Future Leaders programme and good use of local authority staff to support the development of primary provision.

### **Main Judgements**

The academy has made good progress towards raising standards.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Increase the proportion of good teaching, in particular by ensuring that:
  - all lessons provide sufficient challenge for everyone
  - all teachers make full use of questioning to probe and extend students' learning and involve everyone in the lesson
  - teachers always select tasks carefully to ensure that they enable students to learn what they are trying to teach

- students understand what they need to do to improve their work and reach their targets.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Academies Group at the Department for Education. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Russell  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**